Section 3: Understanding the NZCEL levels

What can a graduate of an NZCEL level do?

How do the levels align with CEFR and IELTS?

Carl - ESOL teacher new to NZCEL

Meg – Experienced Teacher and Teacher Trainer

Jane - Commercial Evaluator / Moderator

A useful starting point to understanding the NZCEL levels is to understand the Graduate Profile Outcomes (GPOs). The GPOs are created by NZQA and identify graduate attributes for stakeholders. Section 7 contains more information on GPOs.

Other language frameworks and descriptors are used by organisations across the world to inform the design of language programmes, learning outcomes, and assessments. Although the suite of NZCEL qualifications is not specifically benchmarked to any of these frameworks or descriptors, it is informed by them. Understanding these levels will help practitioners understand what language level is expected at each level of the NZCEL suite.

This section lists the NZCEL Graduate Profile Outcomes by Skill and provides links to language frameworks and descriptors which informed the development of the suite of qualifications.

Graduate Profile Outcomes by skill

Listening

Foundation	Understand familiar spoken words and very basic phrases for the most common everyday situations.
Level 1	Understand frequently used spoken expressions and simple spoken discourse on areas of immediate personal relevance in familiar everyday situations.
Level 2	Understand the gist and key points in straightforward spoken discourse, oral texts, and exchanges on familiar everyday topics.
Level 3 (General)	Understand main ideas and some specific details of oral texts on reasonably familiar topics.
Level 3 (Applied)	Understand main ideas and some specific details of moderately complex oral texts on reasonably familiar topics relevant to the applied context.
Level 3 (Academic)	Understand main ideas and some specific details of moderately complex oral texts on reasonably familiar topics relevant to the academic context.
Level 4 (General)	Understand main ideas and supporting details of moderately complex oral texts for social and transactional purposes.
Level 4 (Employment)	Understand main ideas and supporting details of complex oral texts in employment contexts.

Level 4 (Academic)	Understand main ideas and supporting details of moderately complex oral academic texts.
Level 5 (General)	Understand extended, complex oral texts on a wide range of topics in general contexts.
Level 5 (Employment)	Understand extended, complex oral texts on a wide range of topics in employment contexts.
Level 5 (Academic)	Understand extended complex oral academic texts on a range of concrete, abstract and technical topics.
Level 6 (Advanced)	Understand and critically evaluate complex extended oral texts on a range of topics.

Speaking

Foundation	Participate in simple spoken discourse with familiar people on familiar and personal topics in areas of most immediate need.
Level 1	Participate in short spoken discourse of immediate personal relevance for social and transactional purposes in familiar everyday situations.
Level 2	Participate in a straightforward spoken discourse on familiar everyday topics.
Level 3 (General)	Participate with reasonable fluency in spoken discourse on most familiar topics.

Level 3 (Applied)	Participate with <u>increasing independence</u> and <u>fluency</u> in <u>sustained spoken discourse</u> on <u>reasonably familiar topics</u> relevant to the applied context.
Level 3 (Academic)	Participate with <u>increasing independence</u> and <u>fluency</u> in <u>sustained spoken discourse</u> on <u>reasonably familiar topics</u> relevant to the academic context.
Level 4 (General)	<u>Participate effectively</u> in <u>sustained spoken discourse</u> for social and transactional purposes.
Level 4 (Employment)	<u>Participate effectively</u> in <u>sustained spoken discourse</u> in employment contexts.
Level 4 (Academic)	<u>Participate effectively</u> in <u>sustained spoken discourse</u> in academic contexts.
Level 5 (General)	<u>Participate flexibly</u> and <u>effectively</u> in <u>extended spoken discourse</u> on a <u>wide range of topics</u> in general contexts.
Level 5 (Employment)	<u>Participate flexibly</u> and <u>effectively</u> in <u>extended spoken discourse</u> on a <u>wide range of topics</u> in employment contexts.
Level 5 (Academic)	<u>Participate flexibly</u> and <u>effectively</u> in <u>extended spoken discourse</u> on <u>complex academic topics</u>.
Level 6 (Advanced)	<u>Participate fluently, spontaneously and effectively</u> in <u>extended spoken discourse</u> on a <u>range of complex topics</u>.

Reading

Foundation	Understand familiar written words and phrases for the most common everyday situations.
Level 1	Understand specific familiar information in simple everyday written texts.
Level 2	Understand the gist and key points in straightforward written texts on familiar everyday topics.
Level 3 (General)	Understand main ideas and some specific details of written texts on reasonably familiar topics.
Level 3 (Applied)	Understand main ideas and some specific details of moderately complex written texts on reasonably familiar topics relevant to the applied context.
Level 3 (Academic)	Understand main ideas and some specific details of moderately complex written texts on reasonably familiar topics relevant to the academic context.
Level 4 (General)	Understand main ideas and supporting details of moderately complex written texts of a general nature.
Level 4 (Employment)	Understand main ideas and supporting details of complex written texts in employment contexts.
Level 4 (Academic)	Understand main ideas and supporting details of moderately complex written academic texts.
Level 5 (General)	Understand and analyse extended, complex written texts on a wide range of topics in general contexts.
Level 5 (Employment)	Understand extended, complex written texts on a wide range of topics in employment contexts.
Level 5 (Academic)	Understand, analyse, and evaluate complex written academic texts on a range of topics.

Level 6 (Advanced)	Understand and critically evaluate <u>complex</u> <u>authentic</u> written texts on a range of topics.

Writing

Foundation	Write <u>simple isolated phrases</u> and sentences giving <u>personal information</u>.
Level 1	Write short <u>simple texts</u> relating to <u>personal</u> and <u>everyday topics</u>.
Level 2	Write <u>simple, connected texts</u> on <u>familiar everyday topics</u>.
Level 3 (General)	Write <u>connected texts</u> on <u>reasonably familiar topics</u>.
Level 3 (Applied)	Write <u>clear connected texts</u> on <u>reasonably familiar topics</u> relevant to the applied context.
Level 3 (Academic)	Write <u>clear connected texts</u> on <u>reasonably familiar topics</u> relevant to the academic context.
Level 4 (General)	Write <u>detailed, developed, moderately complex texts</u> of a general nature.
Level 4 (Employment)	Write <u>detailed, developed, moderately complex texts</u> in employment contexts.
Level 4 (Academic)	Write <u>detailed, developed, moderately complex academic texts</u>.
Level 5	Write <u>well-structured, complex extended texts</u> on a <u>wide range of topics</u> in general contexts.

(General)	
Level 5 (Employment)	Write well-structured, complex extended texts on a wide range of topics in employment contexts.
Level 5 (Academic)	Write well-structured, accurate, evidence-based, extended academic texts on complex and technical topics.
Level 6 (Advanced)	Write well-structured, extended, accurate written texts on a range of topics, with synthesis and critique of relevant sources.

Frameworks and descriptors

Some of the most widely recognised frameworks and descriptors include the:

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (usually referred to as the CEFR)
Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)
Global Scale of English (GSE)
International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

All of these provide guidance for expected levels of language performance across a wide range of levels. These can be used to help providers design programmes and learning outcomes and for teachers to design assessments.

Links to Frameworks

> ➢ CEFR

> ➢ Canadian Language Benchmarks

> ➢ Global Scale of English

> ➢ City and Guilds International ESOL

> ➢ Other benchmarking resources

NZCEL GPO mappings to international frameworks

The examples below show the GPOs for different skills at different levels of NZCEL mapped to four of the different frameworks (CEFR, CBL, GSE, and IELTS).

> ➢ Listening

> ➢ Speaking

> ➢ Writing

> ➢ Reading

Listening

NZCEL Level 1 Foundation

GPO	CEFR	CLB	GSE	IELTS
	A1	2	22-29	≈3.0
Understand familiar spoken words and very basic phrases for the most common everyday situations.	Can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning self, family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	[Can] understand simple information about familiar, concrete topics.	Can understand familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.	Understands only general meaning in very familiar situations.

NZCEL Level 4

GPO	CEFR	CLB	GSE	IELTS
	B2	8	63-66	6.0
Understand main ideas and supporting details of moderately complex oral general / employment / academic texts	Can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar.	[Can] understand group interactions about abstract and complex ideas on familiar topics.	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.	Can understand reasonably complex language, particularly in familiar situations.

Speaking

NZCEL Level 1

GPO	CEFR	CLB	GSE	IELTS
	A2	3	30-35	≈3.5
Participate in short spoken discourse of immediate personal relevance for social and transactional purposes in familiar everyday situations.	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. Can handle very short social exchanges, even though they can't usually understand enough to keep a conversation going.	[Can] communicate basic information using simple sentences about immediate needs and personal experiences.	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.	(no IELTS descriptor for half bands)

NZCEL Level 6

GPO	CEFR	CLB	GSE	IELTS
	C1	10	76-80	7.0
Participate fluently, spontaneously and effectively in extended spoken discourse on a range of complex topics.	Can express self fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. Can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	[Can] communicate with increasing confidence in demanding or challenging non-routine work, educational and social situations, and present information about complex, abstract and general topics.	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.	Has operational command of the language... ...[and can] generally handle complex language well and understand detailed reasoning

Writing

NZCEL Level 2

GPO	CEFR	CLB	GSE	IELTS
	Low B1	5	43-46	4.0
Write simple, connected texts on familiar everyday topics.	Can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.	[Can] write short, simple to moderately complex descriptions, narrations, and communications about familiar, concrete topics related to daily life and experience.	Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.	Competence is limited to familiar situations.

Level 3 Applied / Academic

GPO	CEFR	CLB	GSE	IELTS
	Low B2	7	59-62	5.5
Write clear connected texts on reasonably familiar topics relevant to the academic/applied context.	Can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to interests.	[Can] write clear, moderately complex texts on familiar concrete topics within predictable, practical, and relevant contexts of daily social, educational and work-related life experience.	Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options	(no IELTS descriptor for half bands)

Reading

NZCEL Level 3 General

GPO	CEFR	CLB	GSE	IELTS
	High B1	6	51-58	5.0
Understand main ideas and some specific details of written texts on reasonably familiar topics.	Can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. Can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	Understand an adequate range of moderately complex texts in predictable, practical and relevant social, educational and work-related situations.	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.	Copes with overall meaning in most situations.

NZCEL Level 5 Academic

GPO	CEFR	CLB	GSE	IELTS
	High B2	9	67-75	6.5
Understand, analyse, and evaluate complex written academic texts on a range of topics.	Can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints.	[Can] understand an adequate range of complex texts in some unpredictable contexts and on some unfamiliar topics.	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics.	(no IELTS descriptor for half bands)

International English language frameworks and benchmarks

CEFR

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment: Structured Overview of all CEFR scales:
https://rm.coe.int/168045b15e

Canadian Language Benchmarks

Canadian Language Benchmarks: English as a second language for adults (2012). Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks: Ottawa
http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf

Global Scale of English

Global Scale of English Learning Objectives for Adult Learners (2016). Pearson English: https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/one-dot-com/one-dot-com/pearson-languages/en-gb/pdfs/gse/gse-resources/gse-learning-objectives-adult-general-english.pdf

City and Guilds International ESOL

City and Guilds International ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Qualification handbook (2014). City & Guilds: https://www.cityandguilds.com/-/media/productdocuments/international_english/general_english/8984/centre_documents/8984_iesol_qualification_handbook_v28-pdf.ashx

Other benchmarking resources

Aligning the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (2018). https://www.language.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Aligning-the-CLB-and-CEFR.pdf

English Grammar Profile (2015). Cambridge University Press: http://www.englishprofile.org/english-grammar-profile

English Vocabulary Profile (2015). Cambridge University Press: http://www.englishprofile.org/wordlists

English Language Intensive Programme: Year 7-13 Resource (2003). Auckland: National Migrant and Refugee Education Team, Ministry of Education: http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Planning-for-my-students-needs/Resources-for- planning/English-Language-Intensive-Programme-Years-7-13

English Language Learning Progressions: a resource for mainstream and ESOL teachers (2008). Wellington: Ministry of Education: http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Student-needs/English-Language-Learning-Progressions

Guidelines for approval of New Zealand qualifications at levels 1– 6 for listing on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/Registration-and-accreditation/Programme- approval-and-provider-accreditation/guidelines-programme-approval-accreditation-level1-6.pdf

Internationally Recognised English Proficiency Outcomes for International Students as determined by NZQA: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/nzqf-related-rules/the-table/

Resources to help identify levels of vocabulary and difficulty of reading, writing, and listening texts:

Text Inspector (2015). Cambridge University Press: http://www.englishprofile.org/wordlists/text-inspector

Text Analyzer: http://www.roadtogrammar.com/textanalysis/

NGSL English Vocabulary Interactive Resource: Lancaster University: http://corpora.lancs.ac.uk/vocab/analyse.php

New Academic Word List (2013). Browne, C. et al https://www.newgeneralservicelist.com/new-general-service-list-1

New General Service List (2013). Browne, C. et al https://www.newgeneralservicelist.com/new-general-service-list